Journal 4

The second lesson that we taught went so well, or at least so much better than the first one, that it made me wish I could have stayed and taught for the rest of the day. Students at this age are still so excited to learn about things that they are interested in that it made the lesson flow quite well. All of the kids are so excited about their unit project, which consists of building a tomb for King Tut, that they want to learn everything they can that could possibly help them. Another thing I learned about the students’ development at this stage is just how much they are driven by their hormones. Each class comes into the room talking about who is dating who and what new developments are occurring in their social lives. They tend to get quite emotional about it all. I guess I didn’t realize this before because my class up until I entered 8th grade consisted of about 5 people so the drama was not as big as it tends to be in classes of 30 students or so. In an effort to get to know the students more I looked over all of the attendance sheets again and again before the class started trying to remember everyone’s name. When we did the map and social hierarchy activities to get more individual students involved in the class, we walked around the room talking to the smaller groups and trying to get to know them a little better. After we told the students that what they learned in this lesson would be very applicable to their projects, they took an even greater interest in what we were saying because they related it to something they cared about.

We used the New American Lecture strategy again for this lesson because we had activities and a video to break up the instruction. I think that this lesson went very well because we had the breaks planned out very well and were more comfortable in front of the class this time. I don’t think there would be much that we would modify for next time.

During this lesson all of our assessments turned out to be summative. In the beginning of the class we had them do a map activity in which we asked them to recall what they learned from our previous lesson and try to identify where important places and features were on the map. Then we had a social hierarchy activity which we had them do before we taught anything about Egypt’s social structure. We chose to do this because we knew they had learned about social structure and hierarchy in their previous units and we wanted to know if they could use that previous knowledge to put together the “totem pole” of social structure without us just giving it to them. I think this helped them understand it better because it seemed like we made them feel pretty smart as we told them we knew they could do this before we even taught it to them, and because it sort of tapped into their competitive side as they were trying to complete the activities before their peers. After the video we asked them to relate what they had just learned to what they were doing with their projects.

As far as classroom management goes with these classes, there isn’t much we have to do to keep them in check. After the activities we did have to get them to refocus because they were pretty excited about the activity and getting it finished and correct before everyone else. It didn’t take long though which was really nice to see because it really showed that they were interested in learning the rest. During the video we showed, which was a little cheesy, one class laughed throughout the video which we actually expected but we didn’t need to do anything to keep it down as they were at a decent noise level to begin with. The methods we did use to refocus them when we had to were pretty effective as they got back on track pretty fast.